

Message Text

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FOL RPT BANGKOK 12336 ACTION SECSTATE 28 APR 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12336

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: STATUS OF ONCB CROP SUBSTITUTION PROPOSAL

REF: (A) BANGKOK 12049 (B) BANGKOK 9112 (C) BANGKOK 34346
(D) BANGKOK 34342

1. ONCB PROPOSAL TITLED, "PREPARATION STAGE OF THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN THE OPIUM-PRODUCING AREA OF MAE CHAEM WATERSHED, CHAIANG MAI PROVINCE", WAS PASSED TO US EMBASSY FOR INFORMAL REVIEWS, CONSIDERATION APRIL 26. PROPOSAL REPRESENTS LATEST REFINEMENT OF CROP-SUBSTITUTION APPROACH OUTLINED BRIEFLY PER REFS B, C, D, AND IS EXPECTED TO PRESENTED TO ONCB FULL COMMITTEE IN NEAR FUTURE -- WITH DETERMINATION HIGHLY POSSIBLE, PRIOR TO VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE'S ARRIVAL BANGKOK MAY 4.

2. SUBJECT TO ONCB ENDORSEMENT -- WHICH EMBASSY CONSIDERS LIKELY -- SUBJECT OF THE PROPOSAL ALONG WITH A REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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ASSISTANCE MAY BE BROACHED BY PM KRIANGSAK DURING SCHEDULED TALKS WITH VICE PRESIDENT.

3. BRIEFLY STATED, THE RTG PROPOSAL DESCRIBES A PREPARATION PHASE WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT, BEGINNING IN FY 1978, OF A NORTHERN NARCOTICS CONTROL CENTER (NNCC) IN CHIANG MAI. NNCC WILL FUNCTION AS PRIMARY COORDINATION/DIRECTION

CENTER FOR CROP SUBSTITUTION AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, INITIALLY IN FIVE (5) KEY, OPIUM-PRODUCING VILLAGES WITHIN THE MAE CHAEM WATERSHED. UNDER THE POLICY DIRECTION AND OVERALL SUPERVISION OF ONCB/NNCC, OPERATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WILL BE VESTED IN THE PUBLIC WELFARE DEPARTMENT, ROYAL FORESTRY DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION -- WITH ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE DRAWN FROM OTHER RTG AGENCIES AS REQUIRED. ESTIMATED TOTAL PREPARATION PHASE COST \$ 946,723, WITH SUGGESTED US SHARE \$549,375.

4. EMBASSY AND USAID COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL ARE:

A. PROJECT CONSTITUTES FIRST SIGNIFICANT STEP BY RTG TO ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATED CROP SUBSTITUTION/INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT.

B. WHILE A MODEST BEGINNING IT REPRESENTS A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF ONCB AND OTHER RTG AGENCY CAPACITIES AT THE PRESENT STAGE.

C. PROJECT ESTABLISHES CLEAR AND VITAL INTEGRATION AMONG ONCB, RTG OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND VARIOUS THAI RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS. DR. PHISIT VORURAI, CHAING MAI UNIVERSITY CROP RESEARCHER, RECENTLY NAMED BY PM KRIANGSAK AS PRINCIPAL HIGHLAND DEVELOPMENT PLANNER, IS FULLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE WILL BE THE DIRECTOR OF NNCC, BUT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NEW ORGANIZATION AND THE KING'S HILLTRIBE
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PROJECT WILL BE FACILITATED BY HIS INVOLVEMENT.

D. SUGGESTED USG FUNDING IS WITHIN CURRENT FY 1978 AND 1979 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL LEVELS (\$600,000).

E. THE ABOVE NOTWITHSTANDING, WE ANTICIPATE THE NEED FOR FURTHER REVIEW AND NEGOTIATION WITH RTG IN CONNECTION WITH COMMODITIES AND OTHER PROJECT COMPONENTS NOW PROPOSED.

5. SHOULD THE PRIME MINISTER RAISE THE SUBJECT OF THE CROP SUBSTITUTION PROPOSAL DURING HIS MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LATTER RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT ON THE PART OF THE RTG AND GIVE HIS ASSURANCE THAT THE PROJECT, TOGETHER WITH ANY SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE, WILL BE GIVEN THE EMBASSY'S FULL AND PROMPT ATTENTION AS THE CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM IS ONE IN WHICH WE HAVE A LONG STANDING INTEREST.

WHITEHOUSE

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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